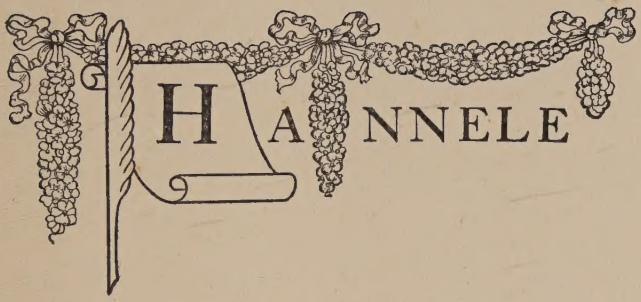
# HANNELE

BY

GERHART HAUPTMANN

ENGLISH VERSION BY

CHARLES HENRY MELTZER


HANNELE

# HANNELE

## A DREAM POEM

BY

GERHART HAUPTMANN

AUTHOR OF

THE SUNKEN BELL

RENDERED INTO

ENGLISH VERSE AND PROSE

BY

CHARLES HENRY MELTZER

DECORATED

NEW YORK

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MCMVIII

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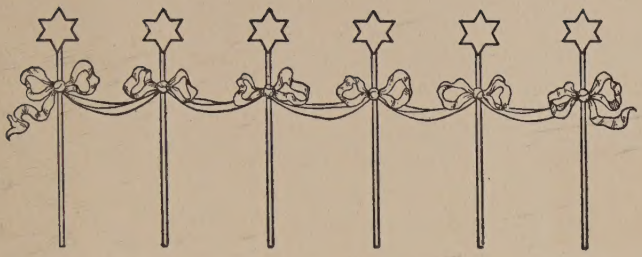

## NOTE

This version of HANNELE was used in the Spring of the year 1894, at the Fifth Avenue Theatre, New York, when the play was performed for the first time on the English-speaking stage, with the approval of GERHART HAUPTMANN, who was present.

## Characters

Hannele
Gottwald (afterwards The Stranger), *a Schoolmaster*
Sister Martha, *a Deaconess*
Tulpe
Hete (Hedwig)
Pleschke
Hanke
} *Inmates of an Almshouse*
Seidel, *a Woodcutter*
Berger, *a Magistrate*
Schmidt, *a Police Official*
Dr. Wachler

## Apparitions Introduced During Hannele's Delirium

Mattern (a Mason), *supposed to be Hannele's Father*
The Form of Hannele's Dead Mother
A Great Dark Angel
Three Angels of Light
The Deaconess
Gottwald
Gottwald's Pupils
Pleschke
Hanke and other Paupers
Seidel
A Village Doctor
Four Youths, clad in white
Numerous Bright Angels, great and small
Mourners
Women, Etc.

*"Suffer little Children to come unto Me, and forbid them not. For of such is the Kingdom of Heaven."*

HANNELE

# HANNELE

## Act I

Scene — *A room in the Almshouse of a village in the mountains. Bare walls. A door at centre, back. To the left of this door is a small window. Before the window are a rickety table and a bench. Near the table and to the left of it is a stove.*

*To the right of the door is a pallet with a straw mattress and a few ragged coverlets.*

*It is a stormy December evening.*

*At the table, seated and singing a hymn which she reads from a hymn book, by the light of a tallow candle, sits* Tulpe, *an old, ragged pauper .*

The stage directions as to "right" and "left" are given from the actor's standpoint.

Tulpe

[*Sings in a cracked, quavering voice*]

Jesus, lover of my soul,

Let me to Thy bosom fly,
While the waves of tr-ouble. . . .

*Enter* HEDWIG, *familiarly known as* HETE, a *disreputable woman of about thirty, with curly hair. Round her head is wrapped a thick cloth. She carries a bundle under her arm. Her dress is light and shabby.*

HETE

[*Blowing on her fingers*]

Mercy on us, nice weather we 're havin'.

[*Drops her bundle on the table and goes on blowing her fingers, standing alternately on each of her feet, which are shod in worn-out old boots*]

We ain't had such weather for an age.

TULPE

What have yer got in there?

HETE

[*Grinning and whining with pain, sits on the bench by the stove and tries to take off her boots.*]

Oh, Lord! My blessed toes are just burnin'!

TULPE

[*Unties Hete's bundle, in which are seen a loaf, a packet of chicory, a bag of coffee, a few pairs of stockings, etc.*]

Ain't there nothin' for me in your bundle?

HETE

[*At first too busy with her boots to mind* TULPE. *Suddenly snatches at the bundle and collects its contents.*]

Tulpe!

[*One of* HETE'S *feet is bare. She piles her belongings together and carries them off to the pallet.*]

Now you 'd best leave my things alone — D'you think I 've been trampin' about and freezin' all the bones in my body for *you*, eh?

TULPE

Ah, yer needn't make such a fuss about it, you fool!

[*Rises, closes her hymn book, and wipes it carefully with her skirt.*]

I don't want none of the rubbish you 've been beggin' for.

HETE

[*Hiding her property under the mattress*]

Beggin'? I' d like to know who 's done

most beggin' — you or me! You 've done nothin' else all your life. And you 're no chicken, neither.

TULPE

Don't you fly out about it. We know the sort er life *you 've* led. Pastor told you what he thought of *you*, he did. I didn't tramp about the streets when *I* was a girl. *I* was respect'ble.

HETE

I s'pose that 's why you were sent to jail!

TULPE

You 'll get there fast enough, don't you fear, my beauty. Just you let me get a sight of a gendarme, that 's all. I could tell him a thing or two about you, 's sure 's yer live!

HETE

Oh, shut up! I don't care for your gendarmes. Let 'em come and see if I don't tell 'em somethin' as 'll make you feel uncomfort'ble.

TULPE

Yer can't say nothin' against me!

HETE

Oh, I can't, can't I? Who stole the overcoat from the innkeeper's little boy, eh?

[TULPE *makes as though to spit at* HETE.]

That 's what you call manners, I s 'pose? Yer shan't have nothin' now, just to spite yer.

TULPE

Ah, go on! I would n't take anythin' from the likes er you, anyhow.

HETE

No, and you won't get nothin'.

[PLESCHKE *and* HANKE *appear outside the open door, against which they have been literally blown by the howling wind.* PLESCHKE, *a scrofulous, childish old man, in rags, bursts out laughing.* HANKE, *a good-for-nothing blackguard, blasphemes. They are seen to shake the snow off their hats and cloaks. Each carries a bundle.*]

PLESCHKE

Lord, how it do blow! One er these 'ere nights, you see if the old shanty ain't smashed to bits!

[*At sight of the newcomers,* HETE *hurriedly drags her bundle from beneath the mattress, picks it up and runs past the men into the courtyard and up a flight of stairs.*]

PLESCHKE

[*Calling after* HETE]

Hey! Hulloa! Yer in a hurry! Wot are yer runnin' away fur? We won't hurt yer, will we, Hanke?

TULPE

[*Busy at the stove with a saucepan*]

Oh, she ain't right in her head. She thinks you 'll steal her bundle.

PLESCHKE [*Enters*]

Lord save us! That 's rough on us, that is! Evenin'! G'd evenin'! Good Lord, what weather! Hang me if I was n't a'most blown off my feet!

[*Limps to the table, lays his bundle down, and wags his white-haired, feeble head at* TULPE. *Pants from fatigue, coughs and tries to warm himself. Meanwhile,* HANKE *enters, lays his beggar's bag against the door and shivers with cold as he puts fuel into the stove.*]

TULPE

Where er you been?

PLESCHKE

[*Stuttering*]

Where — where have I been? Quite a way, quite a way. Up in the hills.

TULPE

Brought anythin' back?

PLESCHKE

Lots — lots of things. Th' priest giv' me this 'ere five-pfenniger, and down at th' inn they give me — er — give me — er — a bowl er soup ——

TULPE

Hand it over, and I 'll warm it up.

[*Takes a pot out of the bundle, sets it on the table and stirs the contents of the saucepan.*]

PLESCHKE

I — I 've got somethin' else in here — sausage. The butcher give it to me. Ay, the butcher.

TULPE

Where 's the money?

PLESCKHE

Oh, the money 's all right. Here 's the money.

TULPE

Give it t' me. I 'll take care of it for yer.

HETE

[*Re-enters.*]

Yer blamed old fool, why d' yer let her have it?

[*She goes to the stove.*]

TULPE

You mind yer own business.

HANKE

Don't worry. He 's her sweetheart.

HETE

Saints alive!

HANKE

It 's only right he should bring her home a trifle now and then, ain't it?

PLESCHKE

[*Stammering*]

You — you ought — oughter know — better, you ought. Can't yer leave a poor old man alone an' — n — not make game of him?

HETE

[*Mimicking* PLESCHKE]

W — why d — don't yer l — let the poor old man alone? Pleschke, yer gettin' shaky. You won't last much longer.

PLESCHKE

[*Threatening her with a stick*]

Y — you 'd best c — clear outer this!

HETE

I 'd like to see you make me clear out.

PLESCHKE

Clear out! D' ye hear?

TULPE

Catch her one on the head. It 'll do her good.

PLESCHKE

Clear out!

HANKE

Oh, drop it! Leave her alone.

[HETE, *taking advantage of* HANKE'S *having turned his back to defend her from* PLESCHKE, *makes a grab at his bag and tries to steal something from it.* TULPE *sees her and shakes with laughter.*]

HANKE

I don't see much to laugh about.

TULPE

[*Still laughing*]

He don't see nothin' to laugh at!

PLESCHKE

Oh, Lord, just look at her!

TULPE

Yer'd best look arter yer bag, or maybe you 'll miss somethin'.

HANKE

[*Turns and sees that he has been tricked*]

You would, would you, you devil!

[*Rushes after* HETE.]

Just you let me get at you!

[*Tramping of feet, as* HANKE *runs up the staircase after* HETE. *Smothered cries.*]

PLESCHKE

Well, well, well! She 's a smart 'un.
[*He laughs.*]

[TULPE *joins in his laughter, which is interrupted by the sound of the sudden opening and shutting of a door.*]

W — what was that?

[*Howling wind heard outside. Snow dashes against the window-panes. Then all is quiet for a moment. The schoolmaster,* GOTTWALD, *a man of two and thirty, with a dark beard, enters, carrying* HANNELE MATTERN, *a girl of about fourteen. The child whimpers. Her long red hair streams over the schoolmaster's shoulders. Her face is pressed against his throat, her arms hang straight and limp. The rags in which she is clothed barely cover her.* GOTTWALD *takes no notice of* PLESCHKE *and* TULPE, *carries the child in tenderly, and lays her on the bed, which stands on the right near the wall. He is followed by* SEIDEL, *a wood-cutter, who carries a lantern in one*

*hand. He also carries a saw, an axe, and a bundle of rags. On his grey head he wears a shabby old hat.*]

PLESCHKE

[*Staring stupidly at the newcomers*]

Hulloa, hulloa, hulloa! W — what 's the matter?

GOTTWALD

[*Laying his overcoat and some blankets over* HANNELE]

Hot bricks, Seidel! Quick

SEIDEL

[*To* TULPE]

Don't stand there doin' nothin'. Heat some bricks. Look sharp!

TULPE

What's the matter with the girl?

SEIDEL

I 've no time for talkin'.

[*Exit with* TULPE.]

GOTTWALD

[*Trying to soothe* HANNELE]

There, there, don't you fear. We 'll soon put you right.

HANNELE

[*Her teeth chattering.*]

I 'm afraid! I 'm afraid!

GOTTWALD

Fear nothing. We won't let any harm come to you.

HANNELE

It 's father! It' s father!

GOTTWALD

Why, he 's not here, my dear.

HANNELE

I 'm afraid of father. Oh, if he should come!

GOTTWALD

Ssh! Ssh! He won't come.

[*Hurried steps are heard on the staircase.* HETE *bustles in, with an iron grater in her hand.*]

HETE

[*Holding up the grater*]

Just look what Hanke 's got!

[HANKE *rushes in after* HETE *and tries to take the grater from her. She flings it into the middle of the room*]

HANNELE

[*Screams with terror.*]

He 's coming! He 's coming!

[*She half rises, leans forward, with anguish on her pale, sick, pinched little face, and stares at the place from which the noise comes.* HETE *dodges away from* HANKE *and runs into the back room.* HANKE *goes to pick up the grater.*]

HANKE

[*Astonished*]

I 'll give you a taste of it presently, you slut, you!

GOTTWALD

[*To* HANNELE]

It 's all right, my child.

[*To* HANKE.]

What are you doing here?

HANKE

What am *I* doin' here?

HETE

[*Putting her head in at the back door*]

'Tain't his! He stole it!

HANKE

[*Threatening*]

You wait a bit! I 'll get even with you.

GOTTWALD

I beg you to be quiet. The child 's ill.

HANKE

[*Picks up the grater and draws back abashed*]

Why, what 's the matter?

SEIDEL

[*Enters with two bricks*]

These ought to do.

GOTTWALD

[*Examining the bricks*]

Are they warm enough?

SEIDEL

Oh, they 'll warm her.

[*He puts one of the bricks under Hannele's feet.*]

GOTTWALD

Put the other one there.

[*Points to another place.*]

SEIDEL

She don't seem much warmer yet.

GOTTWALD

The child 's shivering with cold.

TULPE

[*has entered, following* SEIDEL. *Behind her enter* HETE *and* PLESCHKE *and several other paupers, who stand in the doorway whispering and fussing about inquisitively.* TULPE *moves to the bedside and stands there with her arms a-kimbo.*]

TULPE

Brandy and hot water 'ud do her good.

SEIDEL

[*Pulls out a flask. So do* PLESCHKE *and* HANKE]

There 's just a drop left.

TULPE

[*At the stove*]

Bring it here.

SEIDEL

Is the water hot?

TULPE

Scaldin'!

GOTTWALD

You 'd better put in a lump of sugar.

HETE

Where d' yer s'pose we 'd get sugar from?

TULPE

Ah, shut up! Yer know yer 've got some stowed away.

HETE

Yer lie. I ain't got no sugar.

[*Laughs nervously.*]

TULPE

It 's *you* that 's lyin'. I saw yer bring it in.

SEIDEL

[*To* HETE]

Run and get it, can't you?

HANKE

[*To* HETE]

What are yer waitin' for?

HETE

[*Doggedly*]

Fetch it yerself.

PLESCHKE

Get the sugar!

HETE

Yer can get all yer want at the grocer's.

[*Exit.*]

SEIDEL

And if you don't get some at the grocer's, double quick time—— Well, you 'll see! That's all I 've got to say. You won't want more nor I 'll give you, my lass.

PLESCHKE

[*Who has been out, returns.*]

Ah, she 's a bad lot, she is.

SEIDEL

I 'd like to have the handlin' of her. I 'd take her down a bit, I would, if I was the Burgomaster. She's got no business to be in an almshouse — a great, big, healthy slut like her. Why don't she work?

PLESCHKE

H — here 's a — b — b — bit of sugar.

HANKE

[*Sniffing the aroma of the grog*]

I 'd like to be ill myself, I would!

[SCHMIDT *enters with a lantern. His manner is important and impressive.*]

SCHMIDT

Now then, make room there. The Judge 'll be here in a moment.

[BERGER, *the magistrate, enters. His manner stamps him as a retired officer. He wears a short beard. Although his hair is grizzled, he seems still youthful and good-looking. He wears a well-cut, long overcoat. His cocked hat is set jauntily on his head. One of his characteristics is a boyish swagger.*]

THE PAUPERS

Evenin', Judge. Evenin', Captain!

BERGER

Evenin'.

[*Takes off his hat and cloak and puts them down with his stick. With a commanding gesture*]

Out with you, the whole lot of you!

[SCHMIDT *hustles* THE PAUPERS *into the back room.*]

BERGER

Evenin', Schoolmaster. [*Holds out his hand.*] How are you getting on?

GOTTWALD

We 've just pulled the child out of the water!

SEIDEL

[*Stepping forward*]

Excuse me, Judge. [*Makes a military salute.*] I was working later than usual down at t' smithy. You see, I was puttin' a new clamp round my axe — and just as I was comin' out er — t' smithy — down yonder by the pond, Judge — you know the big pond — it 's pretty nigh as big as a lake ——

[BERGER *makes an impatient gesture.*]

Yes, Judge. Well, there 's a corner in that pond as never freezes over — I can call to mind when I was a boy ——

BERGER

Never mind that. Go on with your story.

SEIDEL

[*Saluting again*]

Yes, Cap 'n. Well — as I was sayin', I 'd just come out o' t' smithy and was standin',

in th' moonlight, when I heard some one cryin'. At first I thought it was only some one makin' believe, as you might say. But happenin' to look toward the pond, I saw somethin' in the water! Yes, Judge. Where it never freezes over. I called out to say I was a-comin', but she 'd fainted! Well, I just ran back and fetched a plank from t' smithy and laid it over the hole — and in a moment I had brought her safe to land again.

BERGER

Bravo, Seidel. We don't hear that sort of tale every day. We hear more about quarrelling and fighting, and head-breaking, down in the village . . . And then, I suppose, you brought her straight up here?

SEIDEL

Excuse me, Judge. It was the teacher ——

GOTTWALD

I happened to be passing by on my way home from a lecture. So I took her to my house first and got my wife to find some warm clothes for her.

BERGER

What do you make of the affair?

SEIDEL

[*Hesitating*]

Well, you see — h'm. She 's Mattern's stepdaughter.

BERGER

[*Seems shocked.*]

That ragged little thing Mattern's stepdaughter?

SEIDEL

Ay. Her mother died six weeks ago.... There ain't much more to tell. She kicked and scratched because she thought I was her stepfather.

BERGER

[*Thinking of* MATTERN, *mutters*]

The scoundrel!

SEIDEL

He 's bin sittin' at the inn, drinkin' hard, ever since yesterday. It takes a cask to fill *him* up, it does.

BERGER

He 'll have a score to settle with me, for this job.

[*Bends over* HANNELE.]

Now, my child. Listen. You need n't cry about it. What 's the girl looking at me like that for? . . . I won't hurt you. What 's your name? . . . A little louder, please. I can't hear you ——

[*He rises.*]

The child seems very stubborn.

GOTTWALD

She 's only frightened . . . Hannele!

HANNELE

[*Gasping*]

Yes, sir!

GOTTWALD

Do as the Judge bids you, child.

HANNELE

[*Shivering*]

Dear Lord, I 'm freezing!

SEIDEL

[*Bringing in the grog*]

There. Take a drop o' this, my lass.

HANNELE

[*As before*]

Dear Lord, I 'm hungry!

GOTTWALD

[*To the Magistrate*]

It 's no use. We can't make her drink.

HANNELE

It hurts!

GOTTWALD

Where does it hurt you, little one?

HANNELE

Oh, I 'm afraid! I 'm afraid!

BERGER

Who 's frightening you, my dear? Come, come, now. Tell us all about it. Don't be afraid. What was that? — I can't understand a word you 're saying. Try and remember how it happened. Did your stepfather ill-treat you? — Did he beat you or lock you up or — turn you out into the street? — It 's hard to get anything out of her ——

SEIDEL

Ay! She ain't fond er chatterin'! Choppin' trees is easier nur makin' *her* talk. She 's as still as a mouse, *she* is.

BERGER

If we only had facts to go on — we might have the fellow locked up.

GOTTWALD

She 's terribly afraid of him.

SEIDEL

'T ain't the first time, neither, as he 's been caught at this sort of game. Jest you ask the folks about him. They 'll tell you what sort of man he is. It 's a wonder she was n't killed years ago.

BERGER

What has he done to her?

SEIDEL

Done? — Druv her out o' doors o' nights. That 's what he 's done to her. Sent her out a-beggin' in the snow. That 's what he 's done. And if she did n't bring him back enough to get him roarin' drunk, out she 'd have to go agen. That 's what he 's done. Many 's the night she 's froze and cried her eyes out, she has.

GOTTWALD

It was n't quite so bad while her mother lived.

BERGER

Well, anyhow, we 'll have the man arrested. He 's a notorious drunkard. Now, my little maid, just look me straight in the face.

HANNELE

[*Imploringly*]

Oh please, please, please!

SEIDEL

'T ain't no use you 're asking questions. You won't get nothin' out o' her.

GOTTWALD

[*Gently*]

Hannele!

HANNELE

Yes, sir.

GOTTWALD

Do you know me?

HANNELE

Yes, sir.

GOTTWALD

Who am I?

HANNELE

Teacher, sir — Teacher Gottwald.

GOTTWALD

That 's right. We 're getting along famously. Now, my dear child, tell us all about it. Don't be afraid. How is it you did not stay at home instead of going down to the pond by the blacksmith's? Eh?

HANNELE

I 'm afraid! I 'm afraid!

BERGER

We 'll go away, and you can say all you have to say to the schoolmaster.

HANNELE

[*Shyly and mysteriously*]

He called me!

GOTTWALD

Who called you, my dear?

HANNELE

The Lord Jesus.

GOTTWALD

Where did the Lord Jesus call you?

HANNELE

From the water.

GOTTWALD

Where?

HANNELE

Why, from the bottom of the water.

BERGER

[*Changing his mind and putting on his overcoat*]

We 'd better have the doctor fetched. I daresay he 's not left the inn yet.

GOTTWALD

I have sent for one of the Sisters. The child needs very careful nursing.

BERGER

I 'll go for the doctor at once.

[*To* SCHMIDT]

Bring the policeman to me at the inn, Schmidt. We 'll have the fellow locked up. Good-night, Schoolmaster.

[BERGER *and* SCHMIDT *exeunt.* HANNELE *falls asleep.*]

SEIDEL

[*After a pause*]

He won't lock him up. Not much.

GOTTWALD

Why not?

SEIDEL

He knows why, *he* does. *Who 's the girl's father*, eh?

GOTTWALD

Stuff, Seidel. That 's all gossip.

SEIDEL

All right. I knows what I knows.

GOTTWALD

You must n't mind what people say. Half are lies. — I only wish the doctor would make haste.

SEIDEL

[*Softly*]

She won't get over it. You 'll see.

[*Enter* DR. WACHLER, *a grave-looking man of four-and-thirty.*]

DR. WACHLER

Good evening!

GOTTWALD

Good evening, Doctor.

SEIDEL

[*Helping the* DOCTOR *to take off his fur overcoat*]

Good evening, Herr Doctor.

DR. WACHLER

[*Warming his hands at the stove*]

I should like another candle.

[*The sound of a barrel-organ comes from the adjoining room.*]

They must have lost their wits!

SEIDEL

[*At the half-closed door of the back room*]

Can't you keep quiet in there?

[*Noise ceases.* SEIDEL *goes into the back room.*]

DR. WACHLER

Herr Gottwald, I believe?

GOTTWALD

That is my name.

DR. WACHLER

I hear she tried to drown herself?

GOTTWALD

She saw no other way out of her troubles, poor child.

[*Short pause.*]

DR. WACHLER

[*Watching* HANNELE *beside her bed*]

Has she been talking in her sleep?

HANNELE

Millions and millions of stars!

[DR. WACHLER *and* GOTTWALD *watch the child. Through the window the moonlight streams on the group.*]

Why are you pulling at my bones? Don't! Don't! It hurts, oh, it *does* hurt so!

DR. WACHLER

[*Carefully loosening the collar of* HANNELE'S *chemise*]

Her body is a mass of bruises!

SEIDEL

Ah, and that 's how her mother looked when she was put in her coffin!

DR. WACHLER

Shocking! Shocking!

HANNELE

[*In a changed, peevish voice*]

I won't go home. I won't! I want to go to Dame Holle.— Let me go to the pond.—Let me go!—Oh, that dreadful, dreadful smell!— Father, you 've been drinking brandy again! — Hark! how the wind blows in the wood! — There was a storm in the hills this morning.— Oh, I do hope there won't be a fire. —Do you hear? Oh, what a storm! — It 'll blow the tailor away, if he has n't put his goose in his pocket!

[*Enter* SISTER MARTHA.]

GOTTWALD

Good evening, Sister.

[SISTER MARTHA *bends her head in response.* GOTTWALD *joins her at the back of the stage, where she is getting everything ready for nursing.*]

HANNELE

Where 's mother? In heaven? How far away it is!

[*She opens her eyes, stares about her in a dazed way, rubs her eyes slowly and says in an almost inaudible voice*]

Where am I?

DR. WACHLER

[*Bending over her*]

You 're with friends, Hannele.

HANNELE

I 'm thirsty.

DR. WACHLER

Water!

[SEIDEL, *who has brought in another candle, goes out to get some water.*]

DR. WACHLER

Does it pain you anywhere?

[HANNELE *shakes her head.*]

No. That 's first-rate. We 'll soon put you right.

HANNELE

Please, sir, are you the doctor?

DR. WACHLER

Yes, my dear.

HANNELE

Am I very, very ill?

DR. WACHLER

No, no! Not *very* ill.

HANNELE

Are you going to make me well again?

DR. WACHLER

[*Examining her quickly*]

Does that hurt? No! Does that? Ah, this is the place! — Don't be frightened! I won't hurt you. Is this where the pain is?

GOTTWALD

[*Returning to the bedside*]

Answer the doctor, Hannele.

HANNELE

[*Earnestly, imploringly, tearfully*]

Oh, *dear* Teacher Gottwald!

GOTTWALD

Come, come! Attend to what the Doctor says and answer his questions.

[HANNELE *shakes her head.*]

No? Why not?

HANNELE

Oh, do, *do* let me go to mother!

GOTTWALD

[*Deeply moved — strokes her hair gently*]

Don't, don't say that, my child!

[*Short pause.*]

[*The* DOCTOR *lifts his head, draws a long breath and reflects for a moment.* SISTER MARTHA *has brought the lighted candle from the table and stands nearby, holding it.*]

DR. WACHLER

[*Beckons to* SISTER MARTHA]

One moment, Sister.

[*The* DOCTOR *and* SISTER MARTHA *retire to the table. The* DOCTOR *gives the* SISTER *some instructions in an undertone.* GOTTWALD *glances at* HANNELE, *the* SISTER, *and the* DOCTOR *alternately. He stands waiting, hat in hand.*]

[DR. WACHLER *ends his quiet talk with* SISTER MARTHA.]

I 'll look in again later on. I 'll have the medicine sent round.

[*To* GOTTWALD]

It seems they have arrested the man at the inn.

SISTER MARTHA

Yes. So they say.

DR. WACHLER

[*Putting on his overcoat. To* SEIDEL]

You 'd better come to the apothecary's with me.

[*The* DOCTOR, GOTTWALD and SEIDEL *take leave of* SISTER MARTHA *quietly as they move toward the door.*]

GOTTWALD

[*In a casual way*]

What do you think of the case, doctor?

[DOCTOR, GOTTWALD *and* SEIDEL *exeunt.*]

[SISTER MARTHA, *who is now alone with* HANNELE, *pours some milk into a bowl. Meanwhile,* HANNELE *opens her eyes and watches her.*]

HANNELE

Have you come from Jesus?

SISTER MARTHA

What did you say, dear?

HANNELE

Have you come from the Lord Jesus?

SISTER MARTHA

Why, Hannele, have you forgotten me? I 'm Sister Martha. Don't you remember coming to see us one day and praying and singing those beautiful hymns?

HANNELE

[*Nodding joyfully*]

Oh yes, yes. Such beautiful, beautiful hymns!

SISTER MARTHA

I 've come to nurse you, in God's name, till you get well.

HANNELE

I don't want to get well.

SISTER MARTHA

[*Bringing her the milk*]

The doctor says you must take a little of this milk, to make you strong again.

HANNELE

[ *Turns away* ]

I don't *want* to get well.

SISTER MARTHA

Don't want to get well? That 's not sensible, my dear. There, let me tie your hair up.
[*She ties her hair.*]

HANNELE
[*Crying quietly*]

I don't want to get well.

SISTER MARTHA

Well, I declare! Why not?

HANNELE

Oh, how I *long* to go to heaven, Sister.

SISTER MARTHA

We all long for that, darling. But we must be patient and wait until God calls us, and then, if we repent of our sins ——

HANNELE [*Eagerly*]

I *do* repent, Sister! Indeed, indeed I do!

SISTER MARTHA

— and if we believe in the Lord Jesus ——

HANNELE

I *do* believe in Him!

SISTER MARTHA

Then you may wait in peace, my child.—Let me smooth your pillow for you.—There. Now go to sleep.

HANNELE

I can't sleep.

SISTER MARTHA

Oh yes, you can, if you try.

HANNELE

Sister Martha!

SISTER MARTHA

Well, dear?

HANNELE

Sister! Are there any — any unpardonable sins?

SISTER MARTHA

We won't talk about that now. You must not excite yourself.

HANNELE

Please, please, please! Won't you tell me?

SISTER MARTHA

Yes, yes. There *are* sins that God won't pardon — sins against the Holy Ghost!

HANNELE

Oh, do you think I 've committed one?

SISTER MARTHA

Nonsense. Why, only very, *very* wicked people, like Judas, who betrayed our Lord, could commit those sins.

HANNELE

You don't know — you don't know.

SISTER MARTHA

Hush. You must go to sleep.

HANNELE

I 'm so afraid.

SISTER MARTHA

You need not be.

HANNELE

But if I have committed one?

SISTER MARTHA

Oh, but you have n't.

HANNELE

[*Clings to the* SISTER *and stares into the darkness.*]

Sister! Sister!

SISTER MARTHA

Hush, dear, hush!

HANNELE

Sister!

SISTER MARTHA

What is it?

HANNELE

He 's coming. Can't you hear him?

SISTER MARTHA

I hear nothing.

HANNELE

That 's his voice — outside! Hark!

SISTER MARTHA

Whose voice?

HANNELE

Father's! Father's! There he is!

SISTER MARTHA

Where? I don't see him.

HANNELE

Look!

SISTER MARTHA

Where?

HANNELE

At the foot of the bed!

SISTER MARTHA

It 's only this coat and hat, darling. We 'll take the nasty things away and give them to Daddy Pleschke. And then I 'll bring some water and we 'll make a compress for you. You won't be afraid if I leave you alone for a few moments, will you? Lie quite still till I come back.

HANNELE

Was it really only the coat and hat, Sister? How silly of me.

SISTER MARTHA

Keep quite still. I 'll be back directly.

[*She goes out, but returns, as the court-yard is pitch dark.*]

I 'll put the candle outside in the courtyard for a minute.

[*Shaking her finger tenderly at* HANNELE]

Now mind! Keep still!

[*She goes out.*]

[*It is almost dark in the room. As soon as the* SISTER *has gone, the figure of* MATTERN, *the mason, appears at the foot of the bed. He has a drunken and unkempt look, tangled red hair, and a shabby old soldier's cap. In his left hand he holds his tools. Round his right wrist is a cord. He stares threateningly at* HANNELE *as if about to strike. A pale light envelopes the apparition and streams on to the bed.* HANNELE *covers her face with her hands in terror. She writhes and moans piteously.*]

THE APPARITION

[*In a hoarse and exasperated voice*]

Where are you? Loafin' agen, as usual, eh? I 'll teach yer to skulk, you little devil, you. So you 've been tellin' tales, have you? Tellin' the folks I ill-uses you, eh? I beats you, eh? Are n't you ashamed to tell such lies? You ain't no child of mine. Get up, you lazy baggage. I don't want to have nothin' more to do with you. I 've half a

mind to turn you out into the gutter. Get up and light the fire. D' ye hear? If I keeps you it 's out o' charity. Now then, up with you? You won 't, won 't you? Well then, look out ——

[HANNELE, *with an effort, rises. Her eyes remain closed. She drags herself to the stove, opens the stove-door, and falls senseless as* SISTER MARTHA *returns with a lighted candle and a jug of water. The apparition vanishes.* SISTER MARTHA *staggers, stares at* HANNELE *as she lies among the ashes, and exclaims*]

SISTER MARTHA

Saints alive!

[*She puts down the candle and the jug, hastens to* HANNELE, *and lifts her from the floor. Hearing her cry, the inmates of the Almshouse rush in.*]

I just left her for a moment to fetch some water and she got out of bed. Here, Hedwig, give me a hand!

HANKE

You 'd best be careful, or you 'll hurt her,

PLESCHKE

It d — don't seem nat'ral to me, Sister. Someone must a-bewitched the girl.

TULPE

That 's what 's wrong wi' her.

HANKE

[*Loudly*]

She won't last long, she won't.

SISTER MARTHA

[*When with* HEDWIG'S *assistance she has put* HANNELE *to bed again*]

That may be all very true, my good man, but you really must not excite the child.

HANKE

You 're makin' quite a fuss about her, ain't you?

PLESCHKE

[*To* HANKE]

You 're a bad lot you are — a reg'lar out an' out bad lot. Ain't you got sense enough to know — as — as — sick folk must n't be excited?

HETE

[*Mimicking him*]

S — sick folk must n't be excited ——

SISTER MARTHA

I really must request you ——

TULPE

Quite right, Sister. — You get out o' here!

HANKE

When we wants to go, we 'll go, and not before.

HETE

The stable 's good enough for the likes of *us*.

PLESCHKE

Don't you make no fuss — you 'll find a place to sleep in, you will.

[*The inmates of the Almshouse go out.*]

HANNELE

[*Opens her eyes. She seems terrified.*]

Has he gone?

SISTER MARTHA

They 've all gone, Hannele. Did they frighten you?

HANNELE [*Still terrified*]

Has father gone?

SISTER MARTHA

He has n't been here.

HANNELE

Oh yes, he has, Sister!

SISTER MARTHA

You dreamt it, my dear.

HANNELE

[*Sighing deeply*]

Oh, dear Lord Jesus! Dear, dear Lord Jesus! Won't you please, please, take me away from here!

[*Her tone changes.*]

"Oh, would He but come
And guide my way home!
I 'm worn and I 'm weary
No more can I roam!"

Yes, yes. I 'm sure He will, Sister.

SISTER MARTHA

What, dear?

HANNELE

He 's promised to take me to Him, Sister.

SISTER MARTHA

H'm.

[*Coughs.*]

HANNELE

He 's promised.

SISTER MARTHA

Who has promised?

HANNELE

[*Whispering mysteriously into the Sister's ear*]

The dear Lord — Gottwald!

SISTER MARTHA

Get off to sleep again, Hannele, that 's a good girl.

HANNELE

Is n't he handsome, Sister? Don't you think teacher 's handsome? His name is Heinrich! — Did you know that? What a beautiful name!

[*Fervently*]

Dear, good, kind Heinrich! Sister, when I grow up, we 're going to be married!

"And when the priest had made them one,
The bride grew pink as heather;

The bridegroom kissed her trembling lips,
And off they rode together."

He has such a lovely beard.

[*Entranced*]

And, oh, his head 's covered with such sweet white clover! — Hark! He 's calling me! Don't you hear?

SISTER MARTHA

Do go to sleep, my pet. No one is calling.

HANNELE

It was the voice of — Jesus. Hark! He 's calling me again. Oh, I hear Him quite plainly. "Hannele!" "Hannele!" — Let us go to Him!

SISTER MARTHA

When God calls He will find me ready!

HANNELE

[*Her head is now bathed in moonlight. She makes a gesture as though she were inhaling some sweet perfume.*]

Don't you smell them, Sister?

SISTER MARTHA

No, Hannele.

HANNELE

Lilacs!

[*Her ecstasy increases.*]

Listen! Listen!

[*A sweet voice is faintly heard in the far distance.*]

Is that the angels singing? Don't you hear?

SISTER MARTHA

Yes, dear, I hear. But now you must turn round and have a good long sleep.

HANNELE

Can you sing that, too?

SISTER MARTHA

Sing what, my child?

HANNELE

"Sleep, darling, sleep!"

SISTER MARTHA

Would you like me to?

HANNELE

[*Lies back and strokes the* SISTER'S *hand.*]

Mother, mother! Sing to me!

SISTER MARTHA

[*Extinguishes the light, bends over the bed, and softly intones the following verses to the accompaniment of distant music.*]

"Sleep, darling, sleep!
In the garden goes a sheep.

[*She sings the rest in darkness.*]

A little lamb with thee shall play,
From dawn to sunset, all the day.
Sleep, darling, sleep!"

[*Twilight fills the room.* SISTER MARTHA *has gone. The pale and ghostly form of a woman appears and seats itself on the side of the bed. She is slightly bent and seems to rest on her thin bare arms. Her feet are bare. Her long white locks stream over her shoulders and onto the bed. Her face seems worn and wasted. Her sunken eyes, though closed, seem fixed on* HANNELE. *Her voice sounds as the voice of one speaking in her sleep. Before she speaks, her lips are seen to move, as though it cost her a great effort*

*to get the words out. She is prematurely aged. Her cheeks are hollow, and she is clad in miserable clothes.*]

THE FEMALE APPARITION

Hannele!

HANNELE

[*Her eyes, also, are closed.*]

Mother, dearest mother! Is it you?

THE FEMALE APPARITION

It is I. — I have washed the feet of my Saviour with my tears, and I have dried them with my hair.

HANNELE

Do you bring me good tidings?

THE FEMALE APPARITION

Yes!

HANNELE

Have you come far?

THE FEMALE APPARITION

Hundreds of thousands of miles, through the night!

HANNELE

How strange you look, mother!

THE FEMALE APPARITION

As the children of earth look, so I look!

HANNELE

There are buttercups and daisies on your lips. Your voice rings out like music.

THE FEMALE APPARITION

It is no true ring, my child.

HANNELE

Mother, dear mother, your beauty dazzles me!

THE FEMALE APPARITION

The angels in heaven are a thousandfold more radiant!

HANNELE

Why are you not like them?

THE FEMALE APPARITION

I suffered for your sake.

HANNELE

Mother mine, won't you stay with me?

THE FEMALE APPARITION [*Rising*]

I cannot stay!

HANNELE

Is it beautiful where you have come from?

THE FEMALE APPARITION

There the wide meadows are sheltered from the wind and storm and hail. God shields them.

HANNELE

Can you rest there when you are tired?

THE FEMALE APPARITION

Yes!

HANNELE

Can you get food to eat there, when you are hungry?

THE FEMALE APPARITION

There is meat and fruit for all who hunger, and golden wine for those who thirst.

[*She shrinks away.*]

HANNELE

Are you going, mother?

THE FEMALE APPARITION

God calls me!

HANNELE

Does He call loudly?

THE FEMALE APPARITION

He calls *me* loudly!

HANNELE

My heart is parched within me, mother!

THE FEMALE APPARITION

God will cool it with roses and with lilies.

HANNELE

Mother, will God redeem me?

THE FEMALE APPARITION

Do you know this flower I hold here in my hand?

HANNELE

It 's golden sesame!* The key of heaven!

THE FEMALE APPARITION

[*Puts it into* HANNELE'S *hand.*]

Take it and keep it as God's pledge. Farewell!

HANNELE

Mother! Mother, don't leave me!

* In the German the flower is *Himmelschlussel*, that is "Key of heaven," but in English, cowslip. "Sesame" seems more appropriate and suggestive.—C. H. M.

THE FEMALE APPARITION

[*Shrinks away*]

A little while and ye shall not see me, and again a little while and ye shall see me.

HANNELE

I 'm afraid!

THE FEMALE APPARITION

[*Shrinking still farther away*]

Even as the snowdrifts on the hills are swept away by the winds, so shall thy troubles be lifted from thee.

HANNELE

Don't go!

THE FEMALE APPARITION

The Children of Heaven are as lightnings in the Night. Sleep!

[*The room gradually grows dark. Pretty voices of young children are heard singing the second verse of "Sleep, darling, sleep."*]

"Sleep, darling, sleep!
Bright guests their vigils keep ——

[*A gold-green light suddenly floods the room. Three radiant* ANGELS, *crowned with roses, and having the forms of beautiful winged youths, appear and take up the song. In*

*their hands they hold music.* THE FEMALE APPARITION *has vanished.*]

The guests who guard thee thro' the night
Are angels from the realms of Light.
Sleep, darling, sleep!"

HANNELE

[*Opens her eyes and gazes rapturously at the Angels.*]

Angels!

[*Her joy and her amazement grow, but she seems still in doubt.*]

Angels!!

[*Triumphantly*]

Angels!!!

[*Short pause. Then the* ANGELS *sing the following strophes from the music in their hands.*]

FIRST ANGEL

The sunlight that glints on the mountain
No gladness, or gold, had for thee.
For thee there was sorrow and sadness
In valley and forest and lea.

SECOND ANGEL

Thy hunger cried out to the reaper
In vain, as he garnered the grain.

For milk thy poor lips went a-thirsting —
They thirsted again and again.

THIRD ANGEL

The buds and the blossoms of springtide.
In scarlet and purple arrayed,
For others had savour and sweetness.
And faded — as thou, too, must fade.
[*Brief pause.*]

FIRST ANGEL

From out of the darkness of space
A greeting we bring.
A message of love and of grace
We bear on our wing.

SECOND ANGEL

In the hem of our raiment we bring thee
The fragrance of May.
The rose of the morn, newly born,
Illumines our way.

THIRD ANGEL

A glory of green and of glamour
We leave in the skies.
The splendour of God is reflected
And shines in our eyes!

THE FIRST ACT ENDS.

## Act II.

*The scene is as it was before the appearance of the* Angels.

The Deaconess (Sister Martha) *sits beside* Hannele's *bed. She lights the candle again and* Hannele *awakes. Her inward rapture is still shown in the expression of her face. As soon as she recognises* Sister Martha *she breaks into joyous talk.*

Hannele

Sister! Sister Martha! Do you know who has been here? Angels! Angels, Sister!

Sister Martha

Aha! You 're wide awake again.

Hannele

Yes, yes. Only think of it.

[*Impulsively*]

Angels! Angels! Real angels, from heaven, Sister Martha, with great, big wings!

SISTER MARTHA

What sweet dreams you must have had, dear.

HANNELE

Why do you speak of dreams? Look, look! See what I have in my hand!

[*She holds out an imaginary flower to her.*]

SISTER MARTHA

What is it, dearest?

HANNELE

Can't you see?

SISTER MARTHA

H 'm.

HANNELE

Look at it, Sister. Only look!

SISTER MARTHA

I see, dear.

HANNELE

Smell how sweet it is!

SISTER MARTHA

[*Pretending to smell*]

Beautiful!

HANNELE

Take care, take care. You 'll crush it.

SISTER MARTHA

Oh no, I must n't do that, my dear. What do you call this wonderful flower?

HANNELE

Why, golden sesame, of course!

SISTER MARTHA

Oh!

HANNELE

Of course it is. Can't you see? Bring the light here. Quick! Quick!

SISTER MARTHA

Ah! Now I see.

HANNELE

Is n't it beautiful?

SISTER MARTHA

Yes, yes. But you must n't talk so much, my child. You must keep quite, quite still, or else the doctor will be angry. Now you must take the medicine he sent for you.

HANNELE

Oh, Sister, why will you worry so much about me? You don't know what has happened — do you, now? Who do you think it was gave me this lovely golden sesame? Guess, guess.— What 's sesame for? Don't you know, Sister?

SISTER MARTHA

Ssh! You can tell me all about it in the morning, when you are strong, and bright, and well again.

HANNELE

I *am* well.

[*She tries to rise and puts her feet out of bed.*]

SISTER MARTHA

You must n't do that, Hannele, dear.

HANNELE

[*Waving her away, gets out of bed and walks a few steps.*]

Please — please do leave me alone. I must go away — away.

[*She starts and stares fixedly at something.*]

Oh, dear Lord Jesus!

[*The figure of an* ANGEL, *clad in black and with black wings, appears. The* ANGEL *is tall, majestic and beautiful. In his hands he holds a long, wavy sword, the hilt of which is wrapped in crape. The* ANGEL *is seated near the stove. He is silent and serious. He gazes steadily and calmly at* HANNELE. *A supernatural white light fills the room.*]

Who are you?

[*Pause.*]

Are you an angel?

[*No answer.*]

Is it me you want?

[*No answer.*]

I am Hannele Mattern. Have you come for *me?*

[*Again no answer.*]

[*During this incident,* SISTER MARTHA *has stood looking on, perplexed and thoughtful, with folded hands. She slowly passes out of the room.*]

Has God made you dumb? Are you an angel?

[*No answer.*]

Are you one of God's good angels?

[*No answer.*]

Will you be kind to me?

[*No answer.*]

Are you an enemy?

[*No answer.*]

Why have you hidden that sword in the folds of your dress?

[*Silence.*]

I 'm so cold, so cold. Your look chills me. You 're icy cold.

[*Still silence.*]

Who are you?

[*No answer. Terror suddenly overmasters her. She screams and turns as if appealing for help to someone behind her.*]

Mother! Mother!

[*A figure, dressed like the* DEACONESS, *but younger and more beautiful, and with great white wings, enters the room.* HANNELE *hurries toward the figure, and clutches at her hand.*]

Mother, mother! There 's someone in the room!

DEACONESS

Where?

HANNELE

There — there!

DEACONESS

Why do you tremble so?

HANNELE

I 'm afraid.

DEACONESS

Fear nothing. I am with you.

HANNELE

My teeth are chattering. I can't *help* it, mother! He terrifies me!

DEACONESS

Fear not, my child. He is your friend.

HANNELE

Who is it, mother?

DEACONESS

Do you not know him?

HANNELE

Who is he?

DEACONESS

He is Death!

HANNELE

Death!

[*She stares fixedly and fearfully at the Angel for a moment.*]

Must it — must it be?

DEACONESS

Death is the gate, Hannele!

HANNELE

Is there no other, mother dear?

DEACONESS

There is no other.

HANNELE

Will you be cruel to me, Death? — He won't answer! Why won't he answer any of my questions, mother?

DEACONESS

The voice of God has answered you already.

HANNELE

Oh, dear Lord God, I have so often longed for this. But now — now I am afraid!

DEACONESS

Get ready, Hannele.

HANNELE

For death, mother?

DEACONESS

For death.

HANNELE

[*Timidly, after a pause*]

Shall I have to wear these ragged clothes, when they put me into the coffin?

DEACONESS

God will clothe you.

[*She produces a small silver bell and rings it. In response there enters — silently, like all the following apparitions — a little humpbacked* VILLAGE TAILOR, *carrying on his arm a bridal dress, a veil and a wreath. In one hand he has a pair of crystal slippers. He has a comical, see-saw gait, bows silently to the* ANGEL *and the* DEACONESS, *and lastly, and obsequiously, to* HANNELE.]

THE VILLAGE TAILOR

[*Bobbing and bowing*]

Johanna Katherina Mattern, your most obedient.

[*Clears his throat.*]

Your father, his Excellency the Count, has done me the honour of ordering this bridal robe for you.

DEACONESS

[*Takes the dress from the* TAILOR *and attires* HANNELE.]

I will help you to put it on, Hannele.

HANNELE

[*Joyfully*]

Oh, how it rustles.

DEACONESS

It 's white silk, Hannele.

HANNELE

Won't the people be astonished to see me so beautifully dressed in my coffin!

THE VILLAGE TAILOR

Johanna Katherina Mattern ——

[*He clears his throat.*]

The village is full of it.

[*He clears his throat.*]

It 's full of the good luck your death is bringing you.

[*Clears his throat.*]

Your father, his Excellency the Count —

[*Coughs.*]

has just been talking to the Burgomaster about it.

DEACONESS

[*Puts wreath on* HANNELE'S *head*]

Lift up your head, you heavenly bride!

HANNELE

[*Trembling with childish pleasure*]

Oh, Sister Martha, I 'm so glad I am to die.

[*Breaking off suddenly and doubtfully*]

You *are* Sister Martha, are you not?

DEACONESS

Yes, my child.

HANNELE

No, no. You 're not Sister Martha. You are my mother!

DEACONESS

Yes.

HANNELE

Are you both of them?

DEACONESS

The children of heaven are all one in God.

THE VILLAGE TAILOR

If I may say so, Princess Hannele ——

[*He kneels to put on the slippers.*]

these slippers are the smallest in the land. Hedwig, and Agnes, and Liese, and Martha, and Minna, and Anna, and Käthe, and Gretchen, and the rest of them all have such very large feet.

[*He puts on the slippers.*]

But they fit you — they fit you! We 've found the bride! Princess Hannele's feet are the smallest! — Is there anything else I can do for you?

[*Bows and scrapes.*]

Your servant, Princess. Your servant.

[*He goes.*]

HANNELE

Who would have dreamt it, mother?

DEACONESS

Now you need not take any more of that nasty physic.

HANNELE

No.

DEACONESS

Soon you will be as bright and blithe as a lark, now, darling.

HANNELE

Oh, yes!

DEACONESS

Come, dear, and lie down on your death-bed.

[*She takes* HANNELE *by the hand, leads her gently to the bed and waits while* HANNELE *lies down.*]

HANNELE

Now I 'll soon know what death is, won't I?

DEACONESS

You will, Hannele.

HANNELE

[*Lying on her back and playing with an imaginary flower*]

I have a pledge here!

DEACONESS

Press it closely to your breast.

HANNELE

[*Growing frightened again and glancing at the* ANGEL]

Must it — must it be?

DEACONESS

It must.

[*Sounds of a funeral march heard in the remote distance.*]

HANNELE

[*Listening*]

That 's Master Seyfried and the musicians announcing the funeral.

[*The* ANGEL *rises.*]

Oh, he 's getting up!

[*The storm outside gains strength. The* ANGEL *draws nearer to* HANNELE.]

Sister! Mother! He 's coming to me! Where are you? I can't see you!

[*Appealing to the* ANGEL.]

Make haste, thou dark and silent spirit!

[*Speaking as though a heavy weight oppressed her.*]

He 's pressing me down!

[*The* ANGEL *solemnly lifts up his sword.*]

He 'll crush me to pieces!

[*With anguish.*]

Help, Sister, help!

[*The* DEACONESS *steps majestically between the* ANGEL *and* HANNELE, *and lays her hands protectingly on the child's heart. She speaks loftily, impressively and with authority.*]

DEACONESS

He dare not. I lay my consecrated hands upon thy heart.

[*The dark* ANGEL *vanishes. Silence.*]

[*The* DEACONESS *lapses into meditation and her lips move as if in prayer. The sound of the funeral march has continued through this scene. A noise as of many tramping feet is heard. The form of the schoolmaster,* GOTTWALD, *appears in the central doorway. The funeral march ceases.* GOTTWALD *is dressed in mourning and bears a bunch of lovely bluebells in his hand. He takes off his hat reverently, and on entering makes a gesture as though he would have silence. Behind him are ranged his pupils — boys and girls, in Sunday clothes. At the gesture of the* SCHOOLMASTER, *they stop chattering, and seem afraid to cross the threshold.* GOTTWALD *approaches the* DEACONESS *with a radiant look upon his face*]

GOTTWALD

Good day, Sister Martha.

DEACONESS

Good day, Teacher Gottwald.

GOTTWALD

[*Shakes his head sadly as he looks at* HANNELE]
Poor little maid.

DEACONESS

Why are you so sad, Teacher Gottwald?

GOTTWALD

Is she not dead?

DEACONESS

Is that a thing to grieve over? She has found peace at last. I envy her.

GOTTWALD [*Sighing*]

Ay, she is free from care and sorrow now. It is all for the best.

DEACONESS

[*Looking steadfastly at* HANNELE]
How fair she seems.

GOTTWALD

Yes, very fair. Death seems to have clothed her with beauty.

DEACONESS

God has made her beautiful, because she loved Him.

GOTTWALD

Yes, she was always good and pious.

[*Sighs heavily, opens his hymn book, and peers into it sadly.*]

DEACONESS

[*Peering into the same hymn book*]

We should not repine. We must be patient.

GOTTWALD

And yet my heart is heavy.

DEACONESS

You do not mourn to know that she is saved?

GOTTWALD

I mourn to think that two fair flowers have withered.

DEACONESS

I do not understand you.

GOTTWALD

I have two faded violets in this book. How like they are to the dead eyes of my poor little Hannele.

DEACONESS

They will grow bright and blue again in Heaven.

GOTTWALD

Oh, Lord, how long must we still wander in this vale of tears!

[*His tone changes abruptly. He becomes bustling and business-like. Produces a hymn book.*]

I thought it would be a good idea to sing the first hymn here — in the house — "Jesus, my Guide ——"

DEACONESS

It is a beautiful hymn and Hannele Mattern was a pious child.

GOTTWALD

And then, you know, when we get to the churchyard, we can sing, "Now lettest Thou thy servant."

[*He turns to the school children and addresses them.*]

Hymn No. 62!

[*Intones hymn, slowly beating time.*]

"Now let-test-Thou-thy-servant, De-pa-ar-art-in-peace ——"

[*The children chime in.*]

Children, have you all warm clothes on?

It will be cold out yonder in the churchyard. Come in and take one last look at our poor Hannele.

[*The children enter and range themselves about the bed.*]

See how beautiful death has made the child. Once she was clad in rags. Now she wears silken raiment. She went bare-footed once. Now she has crystal slippers on her feet. Ere very long she will be taken to a house all built of gold, where she will never more know thirst or hunger.

Do you remember how you used to mock at her and call her Princess Rag-Tag?—Now she is going away from us to be a real princess in heaven. If any of you have offended her, now is the time to beg for her forgiveness. If you do not, she will tell her Heavenly Father how unkind you were to her, and it will go hard with you.

A Child

[*Stepping forward*]

Dear Princess Hannele, please, please forgive me and don't tell God that I used to call you Princess Rag-Tag.

All The Children

[*Together*]

We are all very, very sorry.

GOTTWALD

That 's right, children. Hannele will forgive you. Now, boys and girls, go inside and wait till I join you.

DEACONESS

Come into the back room with me and I will tell you what you must all do if you want to join the bright angels some day, like Hannele.

[*She goes out.* THE CHILDREN *follow. The door closes.*]

GOTTWALD

[*Alone with* HANNELE. *He lays his flowers at her feet.*]

My dear, dear Hannele, here are the violets I have brought you.

[*Kneels by the bedside. His voice trembles.*]

Do not forget me in your new felicity.

[*He sobs and lays his head against the folds of her dress.*]

My heart is breaking at the thought of parting from you.

[*Voices are heard without.* GOTTWALD *rises and lays a covering over* HANNELE. *Two aging women, dressed as if for a funeral, and with handkerchiefs and yellow-edged hymn books in their hands, push their way into the room.*]

FIRST WOMAN

[*Glancing round*]

We 're ahead of them all.

SECOND WOMAN

No, we ain't. There 's the Teacher. Good day, Teacher.

GOTTWALD

Good day.

FIRST WOMAN

You 're takin' it to heart, Teacher. Well, well, I allow she was a sweet child. My, what a busy little thing she was, to be sure.

SECOND WOMAN

Say, Teacher, we 've heard as how she killed herself. It ain't true, is it?

THIRD WOMAN

[*Appears*]

T 'ud be a mortal sin!

SECOND WOMAN

Ay, that it would.

THIRD WOMAN

The minister, *he* says, there ain't no pardon for it.

GOTTWALD

The Saviour said, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not."

FOURTH WOMAN

[*Enters*]

Dear, dear, what weather we 're havin'. We 'll all be froze, I guess, before we 've done. I hope the parson won't keep us long in the churchyard. The snow's a foot deep in the churchyard.

FIFTH WOMAN

[*Enters*]

Th' parson won't have no prayers read over her. He says as how consecrated ground ain't no place for the likes er her.

PLESCHKE

[*Enters*]

Ha' yer heard the news? A grand stranger 's bin to see the parson. He says that Mattern's Hannele 's a saint.

HANKE

[*Hurrying in*]

They bringin' her a crystal coffin.

SEVERAL VOICES

[*Together*]

A crystal coffin!

HANKE

Reckon it 'll cost a pretty sum.

SEVERAL VOICES

[*Together*]

A crystal coffin!

SEIDEL

[*Enters*]

Thur 's strange goin's on down in the village. An angel 's bin thur — an angel as big 's a poplar, they do say. An' thur 's more of 'em down at th' blacksmith's — little uns, they be, no bigger nor babies.

[*Looking at* HANNELE.]

She don't look like a beggar, she don't.

SEVERAL VOICES

[*Scattered*]

No, she don't look like a beggar —

A crystal coffin! — Did you ever hear the like!— And angels in the village!

[FOUR YOUTHS CLAD IN WHITE *enter, bearing a crystal coffin, which they put down close to* HANNELE'S *bed. They whisper to each other excitedly and curiously.*]

GOTTWALD

[*Slightly raising the cloth*]

Would you like to have a look at the dead child?

FIRST WOMAN

[*Peeping at* HANNELE]

Just look at her hair. Why, if it ain't shinin' just like gold.

GOTTWALD

[*Drawing the cloth completely from the body which is flooded with a pale light*]

Have you seen her silk dress and crystal slippers?

[*All utter exclamations of surprise, and draw back.*]

SEVERAL VOICES

[*Confusedly*]

Lord, how beautiful! —
Why, that ain't our Hannele! —
That can't be Mattern's Hannele! —
Well, if it ain't wonderful!

PLESCHKE

She 's a saint, sure enough.

[*The* FOUR YOUTHS *lay* HANNELE *reverently in the crystal coffin.*]

HANKE

I told you there would n't be no buryin' for *her.*

FIRST WOMAN

I reckon they 'll put her into the church.

SECOND WOMAN

I don't believe the girl 's dead at all. She looks too lifelike for that.

PLESCHKE

G — gi' me — gi' me — a feather.— We 'll soon see if she 's dead. — Just gi' me a feather ——

[*They give him a feather. He holds it before her lips.*]

It don't stir! The girl 's dead, sure enough, she is. There ain't no life left in her.

THIRD WOMAN

I 'd kinder like to give her this bit o' rosemary.

[*She puts a sprig into the coffin.*]

FOURTH WOMAN

She can have my lavender, too.

FIFTH WOMAN

Why, where 's Mattern?

FIRST WOMAN

Ay, where ' s Mattern?

SECOND WOMAN

Where he allus is, drinkin' down at th' inn.

FIRST WOMAN

May be he don't know what 's happened?

SECOND WOMAN

He don't know nothin' when he 's full o' drink.

PLESCHKE

Wot? Ain't no one told him there 's a dead body in the house?

THIRD WOMAN

He might er found that out for hisself.

FOURTH WOMAN

I 'm not accusin' anyone, I ain't. But it *do* seem odd the man who killed the child, as you might say, should n't know nothin' about it.

SEIDEL

That 's what I say, and every one in th' village ud say the same. Why, she 's got a bruise on her as big as my fist.

FIFTH WOMAN

He 's the devil's own child, is Mattern.

SEIDEL

I saw that there bruise when I was helpin' to put her to bed. I tell yer, it was as big as my fist. That 's what settled her business.

FIRST WOMAN

He 's the man as done it.

ALL

[*Whispering angrily to one another*]

That 's what he is.

SECOND WOMAN

I call him a murderer.

ALL

He 's a murderer, a murderer!

[*The drunken voice of* MATTERN, *the mason, is heard without.*]

MATTERN

[*Without*]

Lemme in, d' ye hear. Lemme in! I ain't done no harm to nobody.

[*He appears in the doorway and bawls*]

Where are you hidin', you good-for-nothin' hussy?

[*He staggers*]

I 'll give you till I count five. Then look out. Now then. One — two — three — and one makes — Come out, damn you, you hussy. What d' ye mean by makin' me lose my temper? Lemme get a sight of you, that 's all, and I 'll break every bone in your body.

[*He stumbles, recovers and stares stupidly at the silent bystanders.*]

What are you starin' at me for?

[*No answer*]

What d' ye want? Devil take you all. I ain't done nothin' to the girl. Come out, d' ye hear? And mighty quick about it, too.

[*He chuckles to himself.*]

I know what I 'm about, if I *have* had a drop too much. What, you ain't gone yet ——

[*Savagely*]

Don't stand there glarin' at me or I 'll ——

[*A man wearing a long, shabby, brown robe enters. He is about thirty years old. His hair is long and dark. His face is the face of the schoolmaster,* GOTTWALD. *In his left hand he holds a soft hat. He has sandals on his feet. He seems weary and travel-stained. He interrupts the mason by laying his hand gently on his arm.* MATTERN *turns round roughly. The stranger looks him steadily and calmly in the face.*]

THE STRANGER

[*Gently*]

Mattern, the mason, God's peace be with thee.

MATTERN

Where do *you* come from? What do you want?

THE STRANGER

[*Appealing*]

My feet are weary and blood-stained. Give me water wherewith to wash them. The burning sun has parched my tongue. Give me wine, wherewith to cool it. No food has passed my lips since early morn. Give me bread, wherewith to still my hunger.

MATTERN

It 's none of my business. If you 'd been working, like an honest man, instead o' trampin' up and down the country roads, you 'd be all right. *I* have to work for my livin'.

THE STRANGER

I am a workman.

MATTERN

You 're a vagabond, you are. Honest workmen don't starve.

THE STRANGER

For *my* work no man pays me.

MATTERN

You 're a vagabond.

THE STRANGER

[*Faintly, submissively, but pressingly*]

I am a physician. Hast thou not need of me?

MATTERN

Not I. I 'm not sick. No doctors for me.

THE STRANGER

[*His voice trembling with emotion.*]

Mattern, the mason, bethink thee! Though

thou hast denied me water, I will heal thee. Though thou hast refused me bread, yet I can make thee well. God is my witness.

MATTERN

Be off with you, d' ye hear? Be off. My bones are sound. I don't want nothin' to do with doctors. Will you clear out?

THE STRANGER

Mattern, the mason, bethink thee well. I will wash thy feet. I will give thee wine. Thou shalt have sweet, white bread to eat. Set thy foot upon my head, and I will still heal thee, as God liveth.

MATTERN

You won't go, won't you, eh? I 'll have to throw you out?

THE STRANGER

[*Impressively*]

Mattern, the mason, dost thou not know what lies within this house?

MATTERN

There ain't nothin' lyin' here but what belongs to the place, 'ceptin' you. Off you go, damn you!

THE STRANGER

[*Simply*]

Thy daughter lies here, sick.

MATTERN

She don't want no doctors to cure her complaint. She 's lazy. That 's wot 's the matter with her. I 'll cure her, and mighty quick, too, if she don't stop skulkin'.

THE STRANGER

[*Loftily*]

Mattern, the mason, I come to thee as a messenger.

MATTERN

A messenger? Who sent you, eh?

THE STRANGER

I come from the Father, and I go unto the Father. What hast thou done with His child?

MATTERN

P'raps you know where she 's hidin nerself better than I do. What are His children to me? He don't seem to tròuble himself much about them.

THE STRANGER

[*Directly*]

There is one dead within these walls.

MATTERN

[*Sees* HANNELE, *approaches the coffin silently, and looks in, muttering*]

Where the devil did she get all them fine clothes and that ere crystal coffin?

[*The coffin-bearers whisper together angrily,* "*Murderer!*" "*Murderer!*" MATTERN, *softly and stammering*]

I — n-never did ye n-no harm. I was kind to you, I was. I did n't deny you nothin'——

[*Brutally, to the* STRANGER]

Wot d' yer want? Come, speak out and ha' done with it? 'Tain't no business of mine.

THE STRANGER

Mattern the mason, hast thou nothing to say to me?

[*The coffin-bearers grow more and more excited, and frequent exclamations of* "*Murderer!*" "*Murderer!*" *are heard.*]

Hast thou not sinned? Hast thou never dragged her from her sleep at night and beaten her till she grew faint with pain and anguish?

MATTERN

[*Frenzied with excitement*]

May Heaven strike me dead if I have!

[*Faint blue lightning and distant thunder*]

ALL

[*Scattered voices*]

It 's thundering! —
Thunder in mid-winter!—
He 's perjured himself! —
The murderer 's perjured himself!

THE STRANGER

[*Gently and persuasively*]

Hast thou still nothing to confess, Mattern?

MATTERN

[*Panic-struck*]

Those whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth. That 's what I did to the girl. I treated her as though she was my own child, I did.

THE WOMEN

[*Rushing at him*]

Murderer! Murderer!

MATTERN

She lied to me and cheated me.

THE STRANGER

Is this the truth?

MATTERN

So help me God!

[*The golden sesame appears in* HANNELE'S *clasped hands. A mystic greenish-yellow light streams from it. The sight dismays* MATTERN, *who recoils in terror.*]

THE STRANGER

Mattern the mason, thou hast lied to me.

ALL

[*Scattered voices*]

A miracle! A miracle!

PLESCHKE

The girl 's a saint, sure. He 's perjured hisself, he has.

MATTERN

[*Shouting*]

I 'll go hang myself!

[*He presses his hands to his temples and goes.*]

THE STRANGER

[*Advances to the coffin and turns to the bystanders, who draw back in awe of his now noble and imposing form.*]

Be not afraid!

[*He stops and presses* HANNELE'S *hand. Then in a gentle tone*]

The maiden is not dead. She sleepeth.

[*Earnestly*]

Johanna Mattern!

[*A golden-green light steals into the room.* HANNELE *opens her eyes and, with the help of* THE STRANGER'S *hand, rises, not yet daring to fix her eyes on him. She leaves the coffin and sinks upon her knees before* THE STRANGER. *The bystanders flee in consternation.* THE STRANGER *and* HANNELE *remain alone.* THE STRANGER'S *shabby gown falls from his shoulders. Beneath it is a robe of white and gold.*]

THE STRANGER

[*Tenderly*]

Hannele!

HANNELE

[*With rapture, bending her head low*]

'T is he!

THE STRANGER

Dost thou know me?

HANNELE

I have waited for thee.

THE STRANGER

Canst thou name my name?

HANNELE

[*Trembling with awe*]

Holy! Holy! Holy!

THE STRANGER

I know thy sorrow and thy pain.

HANNELE

I have longed for thy coming.

THE STRANGER

Arise!

HANNELE

Thy dress is spotless. I am ashamed.

THE STRANGER

[*Laying his right hand on* HANNELE'S *head*]

Thy shame I take from thee.

[*He lifts her face gently and touches her eyelids.*]

I fill thine eyes with everlasting light. Thy soul shall be all sunshine. Eternal brightness shall be thine, from dawn till eve and then till dawn again. Receive all radiant things, and feast thine eyes on all the glories of the deep blue sea and azure sky and fair green trees, forever and forever.

[*He touches her ears.*]

Let thine ears be opened to the music of the millions upon millions of God's angels.

[*He touches her lips.*]

Thus do I loose thy stammering tongue and quicken it with the life of thine own soul and my soul, and the soul of God Almighty.

HANNELE

[*Trembling convulsively with rapture, tries to rise, but cannot. She sobs and buries her head in* THE STRANGER'S *robe.*]

With these thy tears I cleanse thee from the dust and stain of earth. I will raise thee high above the stars of God.

[THE STRANGER *lays his hand on the child's head and speaks the lines following to the accompanying strains of soft music. As he speaks, the forms of many angels appear, crowd-*

*ing through the doorway. Some are tall, some short. Some are radiant winged boys and girls. They swing incense-censors and strew flowers, and spread rich stuffs on the floor.*]

THE STRANGER

The Realm of Righteousness is filled with light and joy.
God's everlasting peace reigns there without alloy.

[*Harps are heard, at first played softly, then gradually swelling louder and louder.*]

Its mansions are marble, its roofs are of gold,
Through its rivulets ripple wines ruddy and old.
In its silver-white streets blow the lily and rose,
In its steeples the chiming of joy-bells grows.
The beautiful butterflies frolic and play
On its ramparts, rich-robed in the mosses of May.
Swans, twelve, soft as snow, ring them round in the sky,
And their wings thrill the air with sweet sounds as they fly.
And louder and louder the symphonies swell
Till their resonance reaches from heav'n to hell.
Forever and ever, through æons unending,
With music majestic their progress attending,

They soar above Zion and meadow and sea,
And their path is made lambent with mystery.
The blessèd below, in the regions of Light,
Wander on, hand in hand, and rejoice in their flight.
In the depths of the radiant, the ruby-red waves,
Swan dives down after swan, as its plumage it laves.
So they wash themselves clean in the clear, deep red
Of the blood that the Lord, their dear Saviour, had shed,
And they pass from the glory of flood and of foam,
To the rest and the bliss of their heavenly home.

[THE STRANGER *turns to the* ANGELS, *who have ended their work. With timid joy they draw near and form a semi-circle round* HANNELE *and* THE STRANGER.]

Bring hither finest linen, children mine —
My fair, my pretty turtle-doves, come hither.
Surround her weak and wasted little frame
With comfort and with warmth, to keep her free
From frost and fever, pain and weary woe.

Be tender with her. Shield her from rude
touch,
And bear her swiftly up, on pinions light.
Above the waving grasses of the lea,
Beyond the shimmering wastes of moonlit
space
Beyond the meads and groves of Paradise,
Into the cool and shade of boundless peace.]
Then, while she rests upon her silken bed.
Prepare for her, in alabaster bath,
Water from mountain brook, and purple wine,
and milk of antelope,
To wash away the stain of earthly ill!
From off the bushes break the budding sprays,
Lilac and jessamine, with dew bent low,
And let their moisture from the petals flow
Softly upon her, as the showers in May.
Take linen rare and fine, to dry her limbs
With loving hands, as ye would lily-leaves.
From jewell'd chalices pour the reviving wine,
Pressed from the patient heart of fragrant fruit.

. . . . . .

Delight her lips with sweets, her heart delight
With all the dazzling splendours of the morn.
Enchant her eyes with stately palaces.
Let humming-birds, in iris hues arrayed,
From walls of malachite flash gold and green.
Beneath her feet spread velvets, richly wrought,
And strew her path with daffodils and tulips.

To fan ner cheek let palms in cadence sway
And make her life unceasing holiday.
Where the red poppies rear their beauteous heads
And happy children dance to meet the day,
Bid her repose, free now from tear and sigh,
And witch her soul with gentle harmony.

THE ANGELS

[*Sing in chorus*]

We bear thee away to the Heavenly Rest,
Lullaby, into the Land of the Blest,
Lullaby, into the Land of the Blest!

[*The stage grows gradually dark, as the* ANGELS *sing. Out of the darkness the sound of their song is heard more and more faintly. Then the stage grows light. The interior of the Almshouse is seen, exactly as before the first apparition.* HANNELE — *a poor, sick child, once more lies on the bed.* DOCTOR WACHLER *bends over her, with a stethoscope. The* DEACONESS (SISTER MARTHA) *stands by, watching anxiously, and holding a candle in her hand. The* ANGELS' *song ceases.*]

DR. WACHLER

[*Rising*]

You are right!

DEACONESS

Is she dead?

DR. WACHLER

[*Sadly*]

She is dead.

THE CURTAIN FALLS.

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